



## Foreword

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This Special Issue of The Bulletin of Malaysian Mathematical Sciences Society (BMMSS) is a memorial and tribute to M. Ataharul Islam (1955–2020). We, the Guest Editorial Board members, are honored and privileged to be given the opportunity to be involved with this issue.

Professor Islam was a former professor of statistics at the University of Dhaka (Bangladesh), Universiti Sains Malaysia (Malaysia), King Saud University (Saudi Arabia), and East West University (Bangladesh). Before retirement due to illness, his last position was "Q. M. Husain Professor" at the Institute of Statistical Research and Training (ISRT), University of Dhaka. Earlier in his career, he was a visiting scholar at the University of Hawaii, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and the University of Pennsylvania in the USA.

Professor Islam received the Pauline Stitt Award, WNAR Biometric Society Award for content and writing during his early academic life. In addition, he received the University Grants Commission (Bangladesh) Award for book and research in recent years and the Ibrahim Gold Medal (Bangladesh) for research. In November 2020, he received the highest honor by the Dhaka University Statistics Department Alumni Association (DUSDAA), the DUSDAA Outstanding Leadership Award.

Professor Islam was an inspiring educator and researcher who was fully committed to the welfare of his students and the institutions he served. He contributed a great deal to updating and modernizing the curriculum for statistical courses in the universities he taught. He was also instrumental in modernizing statistical methodologies used by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and other research entities in Bangladesh.

As a researcher, Islam's main contribution was to the field of Biostatistics and the methodologies therein. In particular, he had noteworthy publications in the areas of longitudinal and repeated measures data, multistate and multistage hazards models, generalized linear models, Markov models with covariate dependence, conditional and

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joint models for correlated outcomes, survival analysis and multivariate analysis. His research publications included at least 106 articles in peer reviewed journals, 21 articles in conference proceedings, and 9 Book Chapters. He participated in many conferences with paper or abstract presentations, and wrote many “notes” and book reviews for journals. He co-authored four books in areas of his research interest: "Analysis of Repeated Measures Data", "Markov Models with Covariate Dependence for Repeated Measures", "Reliability and Survival Analysis", and "Foundations of Biostatistics". In addition, he was the co-editor of "Collected Volume of Statistical Works of Q. M. Hussain with Commentaries".

Islam was a very popular figure among his colleagues and students alike. He will be remembered for promoting research culture in the statistical community in Bangladesh. He was an active member of the Bangladesh Statistical Association (BSA) and the main organizer behind many of BSA's activities. He played a key role in establishing DUSDAA, under which he organized two highly successful international conferences (2010, 2015).

Islam was deeply committed to the University of Dhaka, his academic home. He went twice to Malaysia (March 2002 to October 2003, August 2006 to February 2008) and Saudi Arabia (October 2003 to August 2005, September 2010 to June 2013) on long-term contracts but always returned to his home turf. Wherever he served, he made the place more conducive to research.

Islam's research contribution went far beyond the realms of academic statistics to real-life issues in economic development, health care advancement, and survey sampling. Throughout his career, he was involved in many research projects sponsored by the Bangladesh government, BBS, US Agency for International Development (USAID), United Nations Population Fund (UNPF), Johns Hopkins University, and other nongovernmental entities. In addition, he had a keen interest in problems of societal importance and eagerly collaborated with researchers working on those.

Professor Islam was extremely polite in his dealings with students and junior colleagues, a perfect gentleman. He treated every student and colleague, young or old, with profound respect. He was always available to them for advice about statistics, career development, or service. He supervised/co-supervised nine Ph.D. theses and more than a hundred master's theses. Many of his research students became professors and leaders in national and international institutions.

Professor Islam had fond memories of his tenures at USM and retained an involvement with his Malaysian colleagues and friends. He was made an editorial board member for The Bulletin of Malaysian Mathematical Sciences Society (BMMSS), and he remained active in that role until his last days. His friends and former colleagues in Malaysia mourn his untimely demise.

We thank the Malaysian Mathematical Sciences Society for bringing out this Special Issue of the BMMSS to honor the memories of our colleague and friend, late Professor M. Ataharul Islam. The articles accepted in the issue underwent the usual double peer-reviewing process of BMMSS. As a result, every article has at least one author who personally knows Dr. Islam. Most, though not all, of these articles, are in areas in which Islam had an active research interest. We would like to thank all the authors who have contributed to this issue.

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